

CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM OF JOYRIDING

In this chapter the ‘problem’ of joyriding is considered by examining: a brief history of joyriding; the current and past legal position of joyriders; definitions of joyriding; its prevalence and seriousness; the sentencing of joyriders and; divers attempts to prevent joyriding by non-custodial means. To set this in context car culture is briefly examined below.

car culture

Throughout this thesis considerable reference is made to car culture. It would take a whole book to set out the history and current state of car culture. McShane (1994) makes a good start on the United States experience and Wolf (1996) adds a critical European dimension but talks of ‘Car Society’. Neither addresses the issue of what a car culture is in sociological terms but, like Hamilton and Hoyle, tend to take it as an existing fact. Whilst they do not engage in a sociological investigation of culture - and therefore what car culture might be - they do address some of the issues amongst the polemic:

British transport policy has been a disaster. Ours is a very car-dependent society - the most car dependent in Europe, and one of the most car-dependent in the world (the USA, Australia and Canada are the only major nations to be more dependent). We have somehow contrived a state of affairs where, for a great many families, life without a car is unthinkable, and certainly be less rich in opportunity and enjoyment. This unthinkability is not because of a lack of imagination: it is because, for most people who now have a car, to give it up would involve profound changes in life-style. (Hamilton and Hoyle,1997:89)

Much of the following sections can be taken to be evidence of a car culture, this section offers some specific evidence for the existence of car culture, including resistance to car culture, and concludes with a brief discussion of the sociology of culture . In 1935 the Minister for Transport was able to see the speed of a vehicle as both a ‘pleasure’ and an ‘advantage’ (The Times,4 January 1935): today speed is more clearly seen as a danger, ‘Kill your speed not a child’ advises a Road Safety poster advertisement campaign. In September 1997 the Government stepped up its campaign against speeding drivers by showing TV adverts featuring children who had been killed by speeding motorists. Speed is now seen to be a danger to pedestrians but also a temptation to the owner driver and to the would be joyrider/driver. Under the headline ‘Essex Man's hot hatchback finally runs out of road’ Kevin Eason, Motoring Correspondent of The Times noted:

The hot hatchback car that was one of the icons of the Eighties is following Thatcherism, Yuppies and power dressing into oblivion. The Escort XR3i, the official car of “Essex Man”, is to be dropped from Ford's range of models as the company trades in the Eighties' obsession with speed for a more caring image. *Sociologists could not find a better pointer to the end of the boom years than the demise of the so-called hot hatchbacks.* (emphasis added) The cars were symbols of success for a generation of motorists who wanted speed and style at bargain basement prices because they could not afford a Porsche. The flash paintwork of the Escort XR3i and its Fiesta XR2i stablemate, which cost between about £10, 500 and £13,000 now, were cars to which young, upwardly mobile drivers flocked in huge numbers. And so did a

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new generation of thieves looking for joyriding thrills. James Duffell of Norwich Union, Britain's biggest motor insurer, said: "It was the appeal of those cars to thieves which became alarming and forced the industry to act." [...] With their spoilers and brash paintwork, the cars had also become unfashionable among a new breed of motorist, more anxious about speeding fines and theft than impressing friends. Julian Rendell, news editor of *Autocar & Motor*, who has studied the rise and fall of the hot hatchbacks, said: "There are a lot of high-performance cars about but they are becoming more understated." (*The Times* 22 January 1994)

There were faster cars than the 'hot-hatches' but the relatively low price and ease of theft made them attractive targets for those who desired their advertised speed. Moreover, the manufacturers used advertising and sponsorship of racing teams to underline the signifiers of speed on the car, such as low-profile tyres, flared wheels arches, air dams and spoilers. Equally powerful cars such as Rolls-Royces and Volvos continued to be positioned in the market, respectively as traditional and luxurious or safe and reliable. Having established that the signifiers of speed were attached to appropriate signifieds the manufacturers and car enthusiasts were able to trick out lower-powered cars with the external signs of speed allowing the bottom-of-the-range motorist to associate themselves with a top-of-the-range car.

'Hot hatches' were never a majority of cars on the road, yet they could be seen to define the fashion for cars in the late 80s early 90s. Mid-range, mid-size saloons suitable for families and 'salesmen' form the bulk of cars on the road. Figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show that of two and quarter million cars registered in 1996 1,405,000 three and five door cars could be described as hatchbacks; but the bulk of these will be bottom and middle-range cars. However, despite the reported demise of 'hot hatches' the sale of the Golf VR6 and Escort RS sales rose 50% from 1995 to 1996 and *Autocar* reports, "No longer the victim of vicious insurance hot hatches have made a mighty comeback" (6 August 1997).¹ The current fashion for cars is for 'fun' vehicles such as four-wheel drive 'off-road' vehicles and 'Sierra Man' formed part of the target vote for both parties in the 1997 General Election. Indeed, such is the iconic significance of 'Sierra Man' that Hamilton and Hoyle's article (*op cit*) on transport policy is entitled 'The man in the Ford Sierra'.

Another change in car culture is the move from the poetic disquiet of Williams' *Autogeddon* (1991) to the direct action of groups that oppose road building (tree-hugging in the face of the M11 extension) and the actions of 'Reclaim the Streets' which seek to resist the car culture by temporary pedestrianising major thoroughfares (for example, Camden High St and Pentonville Rd in May and July 1995) by faking car crashes to block the roads to hold street parties. Anti-road activity has a history too; a *Punch* cartoon of 1910 shows a woman and her dog taking direct action crossing the road in London by trailing behind them spikes (on the train of her dress and on a specially designed sled respectively) to puncture the, then new, pneumatic tyre.

The 'green' perspective of this thesis shares many of the assumptions of opponents to car culture. Space precludes much more than asserting the significance of car culture to issues of car

1. Thanks to Harvey Sharp of SMMT (29 September 1997) for the figures and reference to quote.

crime but some discussion of the sociology of car culture is necessary.

In introductory texts such as Giddens' *Sociology* (1989:31) culture is seen to comprise, "the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create." Clearly the car comprises a 'material good' but 'values' and 'norms' present more problems. Another thesis might seek to show the extent to which the car and roads are predominant in more than just transport policy; here it is only asserted that this is the case. Such a thesis would require the untangling of ideological issues and address the extent to which the social formation is congruent with car culture and the ideological work it does. It might also address the extent to which car ownership or use now represents, not a marker of class but represents a structural cleavage in its own right.

Giddens' discussion of culture takes an anthropological turn in setting out these cultural universals: language; family system; marriage; religious rituals; property rights and incest prohibitions (1989:39). Again no attempt is made to map car use - legal or illegal - onto these categories though motor shows and car show rooms might be seen as evidence of an organised religion with its own churches. Barthes, inspired by the Citroen DS (homophonically *Diesse*, or Goddess), likened the cars to Gothic cathedrals: the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image by a whole population which appropriates them a purely magical object. (1973:95)

Others are less prescriptive in their definitions of culture, as Adam and Allan bemoan, "the word 'culture', in contrast, seems to be appearing everywhere, its meaning stretched to the point that attempts to specify the non-cultural run into severe difficulties' (1995:xiii).

Functionalist sociology might see car culture as offering mobility and the opportunity to maintain family life over greater distances. Marxists might see it as serving international capitalism with pollution and congestion as the contradiction - 'grave-diggers'? - that foreshadows revolution. Following Hall I acknowledge:

the deeply cultural character of the revolution of our times. If 'post-Fordism' exists, then it is as much a description of cultural as of economic change. Indeed, the distinction is now quite useless. Culture has ceased (if it ever was - which I doubt) to be a decorative addendum to the 'hard world' of production and things, the icing on the cake of the material world' (1989:128)

In *Profane Culture* Willis (1978a) talks of 'motor-bike culture' but his recognition of the symbolic significance of the motor bike is within the context of the youth club or the subculture. Here my intention is to show the significance of the car for the whole of society in both material and ideological senses.

It is, perhaps, evidence of car culture that previous studies of joyriding have so readily accepted the naturalness and inevitability of the car as an object, ignoring its symbolic and material effects. It is this taken-for-grantedness that necessitates the lengths to which this research goes to denaturalize the car and deconstruct its meanings for researched, researcher and

wider society.

a brief history of joyriding

Most books about cars are hagiographies of celebrated marques. Most histories of the car are well illustrated coffee-table books with little critical content. It is not appropriate to provide a full history of the car or the crimes committed with it or for it but it is important to give a historical context to joyriding. Set out below are some examples drawn from a limited number of sources that illustrate that joyriding has a long history and that responses to it have been very similar.

In view of the moral outrage against joyriders it is tempting to attempt to do for joyriding what Pearson (1983) did for hooliganism; to go back 20 years to a 'Golden Age' and discover that the Golden Age was located a further 20 years ago and so on to infinity. It might also be tempting to do for joyriding what Hall *et al* (1978) did for mugging; to see joyriding as a metaphor for a crisis in the State or at least in car culture.² If there was a 'Golden Age' without joyriding it was 100 years ago before the car was invented. However, horse drawn vehicles too could be a dangerous nuisance; and horse theft and 'cart-jacking' have long histories. Literature provides some historical evidence of concerns about the car and the ease with which it can be stolen. Kenneth Grahame - in 1908³ - in *Wind in the Willows* has Toad (of Toad Hall) saying at the sight of his first car "The poetry of motion, the real way to travel! The only way to travel!" Silk (1984) has pointed out the similarity between Toad's enthusiasm for the Motor Car and the Futurist Manifesto of Marinetti, or indeed the advertising of Henry Ford:

It is your say, too, when it comes to speed. You can - if you chose - loiter lingeringly through shady avenues or you can press down on the foot-lever until all the scenery looks alike and you keep your eyes skinned to count the milestones as they pass. (in Wolf, 1996:194)

Toad's enthusiasm for the motor car lead him to become a joyrider. The following description could be taken from conversation with a modern joyrider gathered in fieldwork - or a motor-sport enthusiast!

'There cannot be any harm' he said to himself 'my just looking at it!' The car stood in the middle of the yard, quite unattended, the stable-helpers and the other hangers-on being all at their dinner. Toad walked slowly round it, inspecting, criticizing, musing deeply. 'I wonder, he said to himself presently 'I wonder if this sort of car starts easily?' Next moment, hardly knowing how it came about, he found he had hold of the handle and was turning it. As the familiar sound broke forth, the old passion seized on Toad and completely mastered him, body and soul. As if in a dream he found himself, somehow, seated in the driver's seat; as if in a dream he pulled the lever and swung the car round the yard and out through the archway; and as if a dream, all sense of right and wrong, all fear of obvious consequences, seemed temporarily suspended.

2. The release of the film of J. G Ballard's novel *Crash* came too late for substantive inclusion in Chapter 8's discussion of cultural representations of car culture. The anxiety it provoked could be seen as being about the car and not about sex. That is the debate centred on sex but, perhaps, the unspoken fear was about the car. If the car is a taboo subject then this might explain the absence of work that directly addresses car crime.

3. The book first published 8 October 1908 was made up of stories told to Grahame's son from 1904.

(Grahame 1992:38-39)

After a brush with the criminal justice and penal systems - pantomime police, magistrates and Justice's Clerk and a dungeon of Piranesian gloom - Toad escapes dressed as a washerwoman and adds 'carjacking' to his crimes. Carjacking is the practice of taking a car from the owner whilst they are in it. Some would argue that the increased security of cars has led to this displacement of crime from car park to traffic light. This violent criminal escalation also represents a reduction in the craft skills of the car thief. Toad, however, uses artifice rather than force. He hears a car on the road and imagines himself getting a lift and being driven up to Toad Hall. It is the same car that he had stolen before but his disguise fools the owner who, affected by his distressed state, gives him a lift. Eventually he talks himself into the passenger seat. The following quote illustrates Toad's Auto-determinism. Toad clearly believed that the very beauty of the car caused him to steal them when his friends prevented him from buying another (after many crashes).

"It's fate," he said to himself, "Why strive? Why struggle?" and he turned to the driver at his side 'Please Sir,' he said, 'I wish you would kindly let me try and drive the car for a little. I've been watching you carefully, and it looks so easy and so interesting, and I should like to tell my friends that once I had driven a motor-car!' [...] The gentlemen behind clapped their hands and applauded, and Toad heard them saying, 'How well she does it! Fancy a washer woman driving a car as well as that, the first time!' Toad went a little faster; then faster still, and faster. He heard the gentlemen call out warningly, 'Be careful, washerwoman! And this annoyed him and he began to lose his head. The driver tried to interfere, but he pinned him down in his seat with one elbow, and put on full speed. The rush of air in his face, the hum of the engine, and the light jump of the car beneath him intoxicated his weak brain. 'Washerwoman, indeed!' he shouted recklessly, 'Ho! Ho! I am Toad, the motor-car snatcher, the prison-breaker, the Toad who always escapes! Sit still, and you shall know what driving really is, for you are in the hands of the famous, the skillful, the entirely fearless Toad! (Grahame 1992:240-242)

It is not clear precisely where Grahame's sympathies lie. Toad's friends are consistently hostile even to his legal driving. At the book's denouement Toad sends a handsome gift to the gaoler's daughter who arranged his escape. An engine driver is "thanked and compensated" for helping him out run the police and a bargewoman who he stole a horse off is "sought out and the value of her horse discreetly made good to her" No mention is made of his unexpired prison term or the wrecked car.

Whatever Grahame's attitude to the car or to its theft the whole story is treated and fondly remembered as a comedy: Toad is really just silly and unjustifiably proud - an amphibian Bertie Wooster. A different take on this English interpretation is provided by McShane who notes that Disney World has ride a on the theme of Toad of Toad Hall but describes "Mr Toad, as the model of the evil car-loving plutocrat" (1994:144).

Ten years after *Wind in the Willows* is first published; the Commissioner for Police of the Metropolis noted:

..larcenies of motor cars and vans have been frequent. These, again, are in a large measure due to the carelessness of owners. The best remedy in this case is an improvement in the system of registration which

might be so arranged as to make the disposal of a stolen car extremely difficult. (Metropolitan Police 1919:12).

The Commissioner's exhortation to motorists could come from the Home Office's publicity for Car Crime Prevention Years 1992 and 1993. The blame is put on the owner⁴; no mention is made of joyriders though the term was known by then (Partridge, 1984).

In 1921 the Commissioner again returns to car crime, "If insurance companies and underwriters would combine to put their assured on stricter terms much crime of this and other kinds would be avoided.", and, "Thefts of motor cars are somewhat numerous", unfortunately, "the new system of registration ...has not yet had the desired results.." Of the 624 cars and motor cycles reported stolen that year 394 had been left unattended.⁵ Clearly not everyone could afford a chauffeur. Parking was then a substantial problem and more space in each of the Commissioner's reports is given over to the problems of growing traffic.⁶

Flower and Jones (1981:74) found owners complained that Chauffeurs took cars without their consent and took other servants on joyrides; and that in 1905 a magistrate blamed Chauffeurs for 75% of accidents. Yet at that time chauffeurs were certificated by manufacturers, unlike the owner/driver suggesting some class bias in the magistrates views. Pettifer and Turner (1984:219-220) quote an article titled "Get After the Chauffeurs" in *Life Magazine* 1906 which suggested the public hanging in Madison Sq of reckless drivers. The article concluded "Is homicide by automobile so much less culpable than homicide with a gun?" Williams (1991) makes the same point in his anti-car epic poem which imagines an alien untutored in the ways of the car visiting Earth:

The Visitor follows up on the court reports:
 Hit someone over the head with a discarded chrome fender
 And kill them:
 Life.
 Take the precaution of attaching the fender to a car
 And kill them:
 Six months,
 License to drive briefly suspended.

In 1926 (Metropolitan Police)1,092 cars were stolen in England and Wales of which 941 were recovered. In London 809 cars were stolen of which 698 were recovered, again prompting the Commissioner to comment, "In a very large proportion the motor car or cycle was left unattended in the street, and the larceny might have been prevented had some precaution been taken by the owner.", and

4. What Garland (1996) calls a strategy of 'responsibilization'.

5. Webb and Laycock (1992) note that until 1932 it was illegal to leave a car locked in public places.

6. From time to time the Commissioner congratulates himself on the acquisition of new cars (the origins of the 'Flying Squad') to combat crime and traffic problems. This escalation of car use to prevent car crime is fully in line with this the emphasis in this thesis on car culture but cannot be addressed here, other than to note the often shared masculinities of joyriders and police.

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If Insurance Companies would combine in measures to encourage persons who leave cars unattended in the streets to take reasonable precautions, such as securing some part which is vital to the movement of the car, they would substantially reduce the opportunities for theft at present so frequently offered by motor car owners." (Metropolitan Police 1926:16)

In 1928, when in Great Britain cars stolen numbered 2,213 of which 2,042 were recovered, the Commissioner was wrestling with the evidential problems of car theft:

Statistics regarding motor cars, etc, lost or stolen present peculiar difficulties. During the year as many as 1,844 cars and 276 motor cycles were reported to the Commissioner's Office as stolen in the MPD. But of these 1709 cars and 124 cycles were subsequently found, generally within a few hours of their loss, and under circumstances which would make a charge of theft impossible, even if the culprits were discovered...In many cases the object is only a *pleasure jaunt*, but cases where the vehicle is used for the commission of a crime are by no means infrequent. (my emphasis) (Metropolitan Police 1928:16)

In the 1930 Report the continuing problem of taking and driving away and owner indifference is mentioned but section 28 of the Road Traffic Act 1930 is seen to hold out some hope.⁷ The car crime figures for London now outweighed those for the whole of Great Britain two years previously; 4,941 cars were stolen and 4,759 were recovered. In 1931, the first full year of the RTA 1930, there were 186 TDA convictions. But still in 1933 the Commissioner says, "...it cannot be too strongly impressed on motorists that if they leave their cars so they can be easily driven away they are offering facilities for the commission of crime." (Metropolitan Police 1933:33)

The Road Traffic Act 1934 introduced a 30 mph limit for cars in built up areas from 18 March 1935. The Commissioner complained of local benches that they seemed reluctant to convict, thinking a margin over the legal limit may well have been allowed. Under the headline 'METHOD ON THE ROADS' The Times (4 January 1935) reported:

Mr. Hore-Belisha, Minister of Transport, broadcasting in the National programme at 9.20 p.m. last night, said:- New drivers of mechanical vehicles will have to prove from April next, as engine drivers and pilots now do, their capacity and skill and their knowledge of the mechanism for which they assume responsibility. [...] To be able to travel at speed is a pleasant sensation and an advantage which this generation possesses. But surely no one can claim to enjoy this pleasure and profit by this advantage in circumstances which endanger other people. In a built-up area 30 miles an hour should be a maximum, and I propose to make it so. I am asking the local authorities to expedite their arrangements for marking their areas.

The Commissioner's report for 1940 notes that black-out conditions and petrol rationing decreased car theft but increased bike theft. The 1946 report distinguishes theft from taking away (ie recovered within 2 days). That year in London 2,093 cars were recorded as stolen though

7. It created the offence of taking and driving away (TDA).

1,315 were recovered but 9,984 were reported stolen of which 9,241 were recovered. The tables accompanying that year's report records that 16.5% of those convicted of 'larceny of motor' were under 17 and 35.7% 17-21. The increased numbers of cars on the road lead to rising car crime figures even when recorded crime more generally fell. Recorded crime fell three years running in 1952, 53 and 54 - when it fell below the pre-War figure.

Car crime had continued to rise up to the war as did car ownership but the Commissioner did not return to the subject until 1957 when he complained that: Many of these vehicles are used in the commission of crime: often, driven by uninsured drivers involving innocent people. The offence of stealing or 'taking and driving away' a motor vehicle is in my view an extremely serious one; the manner in which the offenders are often dealt with by the courts does not afford an effective deterrent. (Metropolitan Police 1957:9)

By 1965 the numbers of motor vehicles stolen in London was 7,284 and 39,553 were Taken and Driven Away (TDA). In 1974 'autocrime' (particularly taking away) was up 50% from 4 years previously with 58,025 thefts and TDAs.

Whilst autocrime continued to worsen it was not until 1986 that the Commissioner was again moved to note, contradicting the 1926 report: "at one time, unattended vehicles in the street were a rare sight" (Metropolitan Police 1986:39). He reflects the thoughts of his predecessors when he goes on to say, "A more thoughtful approach to the security of vehicles and contents by both the public and vehicle manufacturers is undoubtedly the most effective way of securing a substantive decrease in crime." Nonetheless, 'Autocrime' was dropped that year from being a specific Force priority as he was not satisfied that "the investment of police resources had resulted in sufficient public benefit."

Joyriding has been given considerable prominence by the media and Parliament but the most recent peak was the summer of 1991 when 'riots' in a number of places, but particularly the Blackbird Leys Estate in Oxford and the Meadowell Estate on Tyneside, were accompanied by spectacular displays of joyriding that were known as 'hotting' or 'frisking' (Campbell, 1993). Two councillors in Oxford (Groombridge, 1994) regretted the extent to which the Blackbird Leys Estate had come to be labelled by the media. This and the media 'feeding frenzy' resulted in a toughening up of the legislation with the passing of the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1991. Some researchers⁸ note a change during this year in the media coverage of accidents involving joyriders from sympathetic to condemnatory. Where once the media may have spoken of a 'tragic' death caused by a joyrider they moved to speak of 'brutal', 'mad' or 'callous' joyriders. A typical example of coverage by a broadsheet paper is as follows:

A Woman of 25 [...] was clearing snow from her car one morning last Christmas when two youths smashed their stolen car into her. She was left lying in the road, her leg horribly mutilated. The youths showed no remorse, no sense of guilt. They fled like cowards, leaving their victim bleeding badly and without caring if she lived or died. Her leg was amputated and last week she won the heart of the nation when she spoke

8. Personal communication, Barry Goldson, University of Liverpool and a point made by Ian Taylor in discussing joyriding in Salford (The Guardian, 14 May 1997).

bravely of her will to get on with her life in spite of her terrible disability.

And

On Friday night Lord Weir, chairman of Scotland's biggest engineering company, became another victim of the car-crime madness. He was recovering in hospital yesterday after a stolen car driven by three men smashed into his Jaguar while he was returning home on the Glasgow to Ayr road. The three occupants of the stolen car were killed. These are sickening stories of needless death and injury caused by those seeking cheap thrills. Cars are being stolen every minute at a frightening rate. Foolish boys, and men who are no more than boys, consider it entertaining to steal other people's property and put other lives in danger. The joyriding epidemic goes on in spite of reforms aimed at toughening up sentencing and the introduction of new laws laughably intended to deter the culprits. (Sunday Times 11 September 1994 'Deliver us from evil')

Amongst the condemnatory rhetoric is some recognition that joyriding is fun and that it is young men - 'foolish boys, and men who are no more than boys' - that are mainly to be blamed. The abusive and belittling adjective 'foolish', the equating of men with boys and possibly the unspoken corollary that the boys want to be men all suggest an implicit critique of certain masculinities. Yet, it is a critique mounted from within masculinity. The leader writer is laying down the law - 'the law of the father'. Moreover it is a critique delivered from within car culture since it fails to connect the accidents to the way that the cars are driven which shares all too much with the way that owners drive their cars. Whilst some of the concerns of the media were shared by my interviewees (Groombridge, 1994) one opined that the amount of joyriding was related to media coverage and eleven (out of three magistrates, four social workers and twelve probation officers) questioned agreed that the media caused car crime.

the legal position of joyriding

There is no United Kingdom (the three jurisdictions of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) offence called joyriding and therefore no official statistics for it. Hall *et al* (1978) show how 'mugging' was constructed from a number of disparate offences by the State and media. Joyriding is no less constructed but from a more unified body of offences related to the theft of a car. Whilst joyriding is dealt with as a type of theft, the public concern is often with the way in which the stolen car is driven. It is therefore appropriate to set out some general history of motoring law up to the point when joyriding attracted specific legislative attention before moving to discuss the law specifically relating to joyriding. In the discussion below Plowden (1971), Kriefman (1975) and Holroyd (1992) are relied on for the history of motoring law and successive Governments' failure to control the car or the criminality of owners and users alike. The history is selective, not all legislation or policy discussion is mentioned. The point is to show some of the continuities with today but also occasional differences.

The Stage Carriage Act 1832 was the first Act to concern itself with the way that vehicles were driven on the road. It included measures against driving whilst intoxicated, negligently or furiously. The Town Police Clauses Act 1847 strengthened the law on driving a horse or carriage furiously (see Chapter 8 for its ongoing application). The Locomotive Act 1861 set a speed limit

of 10 mph for locomotives (early steam driven vehicles like traction engines) in the country and 4 mph in town. The Offences Against the Person Act 1861 made wanton or furious driving or racing punishable with up to 2 years hard labour. Such was the concern of Parliament that speed limits were cut by the Locomotive Act 1865 to 4 mph in the country and 2 mph in town; it also called for 3 attendants and a red flag. The speed limit was raised again - to 14 mph - by the Locomotives on Highways Acts 1896.

These speed limits and other rules of the road were not obeyed. The very first use of a car for a long journey was made by Bertha Benz in 1888 when she drove the car (without Carl's consent!) the 62 miles there and back to her home from Mannheim (Flower & Jones, 1981). *Autocar Magazine* (1 November 1995) notes "On 3 July 1895 the Hon. Evelyn Ellis flouted the law and became the first man to drive a car in Britain". There were dissenting voices though, a leader in the *Times*, 15 December 1890, complained:

...there are a number of drivers who are a curse to the neighbourhood in which they drive....drivers who seem, when they mount their cars, to put from them altogether the instincts of gentlemen.

Parliamentary debate on the 1903 Motor Car Act centred on whether the test of criminal driving should be subjective - such as recklessly driving - or objective - such as exceeding the speed limit. The supporters of motoring argued that it was bad drivers that were the problem not speed. This mirrors the argument of the gun lobby that it is not guns that kill. The subtext was that gentlemen could - and should - decide their capabilities whilst on the road and only explain them to other gentlemen on the bench. Objective tests such as speeding put gentlemen within the ambit of the police, who may recognize a gentleman but also recognised their duty to the law. There may no longer be any 'gentlemen' but drivers still ask the police, when stopped for traffic offences, 'haven't you any real criminals to chase?'. Though the Bill originally proposed abolishing the speed limit the Act included a 20 mph speed limit and a dangerous driving clause. This Act was renewed occasionally up to 1930. Since then new Acts have increased the number of offences and new ways of detecting them such as the breathalyser and the speed camera.

Section 28 of the Road Traffic Act (RTA) 1930 created the offence known as 'taking and driving away' or more correctly taking and driving away "any motor vehicle without having consent of the owner thereof or other lawful authority"; the maximum penalty was twelve months imprisonment. A vehicle that was unrecovered after 48 hours was considered stolen. The law on TDA remained essentially unchanged until 1968 except that in 1960 the period for recovery was extended to one calendar month. The RTA 1934 saw the introduction of the driving test. In 1962 the RTA emphasised disqualification as a penalty. Endorsements were made mandatory and disqualification discretionary for TDA and theft of a vehicle. A passenger also became liable under this act if "knowing that a motor vehicle has been so taken...drives it or allows himself to be carried in or on it".

The Theft Act 1968 amended descriptions of car crime - under section 12 Taking and Driving Away became Taking Without Consent (TWOC) - and more notably redefined the offence from motoring law to theft. It was a triable-either-way offence with a maximum of three

years imprisonment. However, the Criminal Justice Act 1988 s37(1) redefined it as a summary offence with a six month maximum penalty. This was due to the pressure of business on the Courts but it can be argued that it sent 'a message' to joyriders that their offence was considered less serious. However, given the young age at which joyriders start the adult penalties are not the most appropriate guide. There was a rise in TWOC from 1988 (but after a fall in 1987) and in line with prevailing upward trend of recorded crime. The major change appears to have occurred from the late 60s, before which time the rate was proportionate to the rise in the numbers of vehicles on the road (Webb and Laycock, 1992).

Despite the ongoing rise in car crime the law remained as it was until the passing of the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1992. On the Second Reading of the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1992 (AVTA) the, then, Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker, said that it would "... give the courts the power to sentence the serious cases in the way that they deserve"(Hansard cols 620-701). This was because s12 Theft Act 1968 was not seen to carry sufficient penalties. Moreover, if damage was discovered upon recovery of the vehicle it was difficult to determine who might be held responsible.

Section 1 of the AVTA 1992 inserted a new section 12A into the Theft Act 1968 creating the new offence of "aggravated taking of a mechanically propelled vehicle" which is triable either way. This aggravated offence is committed in certain aggravating circumstances by the person committing the basic offence of TWOC. These occur at any time between the vehicle being taken and being recovered and are: a) that the vehicle is driven dangerously on the road or other public place; b) that an injury causing accident arises from the driving of the vehicle; c) that damage is caused to property other than the vehicle and; d) that damage is caused to the vehicle.⁹ The intention of the driver or passengers are not relevant. The only defence is that the aggravating circumstance occurred before they took the vehicle or they were not in on near the vehicle when the aggravated circumstance occurred.

The penalties available to the Crown Court are two years or five years if an aggravating accident causes death. There also existed the offence of causing death by reckless driving (s1 RTA 1988) now replaced by causing death by dangerous driving (s1 RTA 1991) but these are triable only on indictment following reckless or dangerous behaviour yet the triable either way offence can arise by accident. Where damage does not exceed £2,000 the offence is only summary which may leave repairers estimates having a significant place in mode of trial decisions. All 12A cases carry obligatory disqualification and endorsement of 3 - 11 points upon the licence.

At the time, Holroyd (1992) summarised the main Parliamentary objections as being:

- that it created a legal lottery in the random outcomes of any taking - though this element

9 . The same definition of dangerous as is used in the RTAs i.e. that the vehicle "is driven in a way which falls below what would be expected of a careful and competent driver, and it would be obvious to a careful and competent driver that driving the vehicle in that way would be dangerous".

of risk is intended to add to the deterrent effect

- and that it would not deter, particularly as the 15-17 year old offender can only be sentenced to a maximum of 12 months (CJA 1991) and those under 14 not subject to custodial sentences
- that the current law was adequate

It should also be noted that the Act was passed in one day (9 December 1991). The speed with which previous policy was overturned bears comparison with the about turn on the 'just deserts' philosophy of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 after only six months in operation.

a definition of joyriding

Partridge (1984) identifies the word 'joyride' as first used in a criminal sense in the United States in 1909 and in 1912 for the UK. West and Farrington (1977:36) are no radicals but note that TDA is "aptly named 'joyriding' ". Yet it is common for press, Ministers and, more understandably, relatives of deceased road users to make observations like, 'there is no joy in joyriding.' However, these denunciations do not help to us understand joyriding.

As can be seen from the brief history of the legal position there is no crime of joyriding but popular, official and criminological literature is full of references to it or descriptions of activities that are recognisable as joyriding. For all its deficiencies, the offence of Aggravated Vehicle Taking gets close to summing up popular and media representations of joyriding, but nowhere near the complexities that this study presents. This is no coincidence as the law was specifically drafted to deal with the offence as pictured by the media. Statistics for conviction for this offence, however, are a poor guide to the extent of joyriding for all the usual reasons such as non-reporting and non-conviction (Bottomley and Pease, 1986) but additionally because joyriding may well be a component of other more serious offences which do get recorded, or as shall be argued, a characteristic of much 'normal' driving by the owners of vehicles.

It should be clear that joyriding is not a unified transhistorical description. Originally the expression joyriding did not have criminal connotations but referred to a trip in an aeroplane or car for non-utilitarian (and therefore unecological) reasons. The original connotation must still have some resonance as a motor dealer in North London trades under the name Joyride.¹⁰ Moreover, even past criminal connotations have emphasised the joyful element of joyriding and not accorded it the status of fully 'criminal' even though it is now covered by theft not motoring legislation. Now, however, the 'joyrider' is a fully-fledged 'folk devil' whereas motoring offences posing similar or greater dangers continue to be downplayed by many despite the fulminations of Ministers and the campaigning efforts of groups like RoadPeace, the Campaign Against Drink Driving and Mothers Against Drink Driving.

In Chapter 2 some time will be spent in discussing various typologies of joyriding which seek to set out a number of different types of joyriding. These generally do not seek to define

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joyriding itself but to identify types of car theft which might properly be called joyriding and distinguish them from those which might not, primarily because of a clear instrumental reason for the theft of the car rather than an expressive one.

It is clear that joyriding - even if only indicated by responses to it - is a dynamic phenomenon beyond the obviousness of use of the car by someone not authorised to use it. It is argued here that joyriding itself or representations of it in popular or criminological usage have changed over time and may even differ between areas of the country or between countries. It is beyond the scope of this study to attempt a full comparison between different countries, car cultures and varieties of illegal car use. Whilst it is clear that something recognisable as joyriding occurs in all countries with cars it is not clear that precisely the same processes are at work.

The United States is the paradigm car culture but cars are cheaper and available legally at a younger age so taking cars purely for fun seems less likely. Car ownership rates in Holland are similar to the UK but car use is less (walking, cycling and public transport are still highly favoured). Some of these might be expected to feed into the different rates of victimisation reported in these countries. For example, in 1988 2.4% of English and Welsh car owners had their car stolen, 2.2% of Americans but only 0.4% of Dutch; whereas thefts from cars shows a different pattern with 7.3% of English and Welsh owners being victimised, 9.7% of Americans and 6.8% of Dutch. Yet vandalism to cars shows a different pattern again with 8.8% of English and Welsh, 9.3% of Americans and 10.6% of Dutch (Van Dijk, Mayhew and Killias, 1990). None of this can be directly related to joyriding but it does raise the supposition that car crime (and therefore joyriding, though not in any simple proportion) differs around the world.

International comparisons indicate the widespread nature of the problem but not its specificity. Case studies within and between countries might indicate which elements of a car culture effect the amount and type of joyriding. Canadian studies (Tremblay *et al.*, 1994) relate reductions in joyriding in Quebec to reductions in the numbers of 15-24 year olds, increased vehicle ownership and increased security. In their study joyriding is contrasted with 'jockeying' (professional theft) but neither are defined and proxies are used to measure them, recovered cars standing in for joyriding and unrecovered cars for jockeying. Yet joyridden vehicles may not be recovered for a number of reasons such as being set alight and insurance frauds by owners of vehicles account for a substantial proportion of unrecovered cars. In the UK Webb and Laycock (1992) estimate that 65% of theft is for casual use (and therefore roughly equivalent to joyriding broadly defined), 27% professional theft and 8% insurance fraud.

These very brief international comparisons and the history of joyriding and the legislation should show that there are a number of meanings to joyriding. This study is an attempt to understand some of these meanings and to suggest connections between them. A particular concern is to come to understand the joyriding that provoked the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act and its relationship to car culture. It is argued that car culture valorises the ownership and use of the car for pleasure; making joydrivers if not joyriders of all car owners. Moreover, in theory and in practice it is difficult to separate out illegal joyriding from other illegal car use and theft. Part

of the intention of this study is to explore these different meanings, to deconstruct the popular and penal discourses which assume an ahistorical joyriding which is dealt with by a 'criminology of the other' - punishment and demonisation of joyriders - or a 'criminology of the self' - the owner's responsibility to protect their car (Garland, 1996).

In this section it has only been possible to hint at much of the argument to come in later chapters. The next section therefore necessarily employs a 'common-sense' definition of joyriding to illustrate the reality of the problem.

current reality of joyriding

In as much as this thesis is informed by left realism, the 'reality' of joyriding is accepted - though problematised by issues of gender and the environment. This section sets out some of the reality of car crime using figures from both national and local victimisation surveys and recorded crime figures. The national victimisation figures from the British Crime Survey are given to show the full extent of car crime, though recorded crime figures for car theft are very close to the victimisation figures because of the need to report required by insurance companies. The recorded crime figures, both national and local, indicate the scale of the pressure on the police. The Thames Valley Police area, particularly the Cowley area, has been chosen for the local figures because of the interest sparked by the events on Blackbird Leys Estate during 1991.¹¹ The Islington Crime Surveys are used to show some of the impact of car crime and judge it against other crimes and incivilities. Crime statistics even where augmented by victims surveys only record the incidence of victimisation not its impact. This too is briefly discussed.

The 1992 British Crime Survey found that one in five car owners had been the victims of car crime in 1991, 3% had their car stolen, 12% had something stolen from their car and 5% suffered an attempt on their car. Car crimes constituted 36% of crimes picked up by the survey, a total of nearly 5.5 million offences against private owners. Amongst thefts of motor cars and taking without consent it is not possible to tell whether the reason was for joyriding, professional theft or to defraud insurance companies. The BCS shows a drop in percentage of cars recovered from 83% in 1981 to 76% in 1991 suggesting that professional and insurance theft are rising faster than joyriding.

The 1992 British Crime Survey (Home Office, 1993a) reveals that from the period 1981 to 1991 car vandalism had increased by only 7% but attempted theft of or from cars had risen 395% from 180,000 to 890,000. Showing increases between figures, but clearly related, are theft from cars up 86% and theft of cars up 81%. Those figures represent extrapolations from self-reported victimisation and therefore reveal otherwise 'hidden' car crime. Turning to reported crime at a local level: the Oxford area in the Thames Valley Police area shows for the calendar years 1990, 1991 and 1992 rises of thefts from vehicles as follows: 2,934; 4,283 and 4,533. For thefts from the figures are: 2,395; 2,911 and 3,437. Focussing on the smaller area which attracted the media

11. The figures were kindly provided by Thames Valley Police during the course of an evaluation of the TRAX Motor Project. They will be referred to as (TVP 1994) in the text.

headlines we find that the Cowley section recorded the figures in the table 1.1. below.
Table 1.1 Thefts from and of vehicles in the Cowley section of Oxford Town, Thames Valley Police from 1986 - 1992 adapted from (TVP, 1994)

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
from	902	912	810	1,198	1,697	2,450	2,586
of	747	687	747	1,181	1,509	1,600	1,862

The recorded crime figures for the period July 1993 to June 1994 (Home Office 1994a) show that vehicle crimes fell by 9% to 1.4 million, including 570,300 thefts of vehicles, whereas the total of all crimes fell by 5%. In the Thames Valley area the overall fall was below the national average (at 4%) doing only slightly better with vehicle crime at 5%. By way of comparison the City of London cut car crime (obviously from a smaller base and with the help of anti-terrorist measures) but six forces had an increase in car crime (Humber side fared worse with a 9% increase). Thames Valley (TVP, 1994) continue to have an above average (27%) percentage of its notifiable offence caseload comprising vehicle crime (32%). We find in the ten months from Jan-Oct 1993 that the Thames Valley Police recorded: 36,925 offences of theft from a motor vehicle; 19,612 thefts of a motor vehicle; 139 cases of Aggravated Vehicle Taking and 1 death by aggravated vehicle taking. Narrowing the focus to the Oxford area we find: 3,811 thefts from cars recorded; 2,903 thefts of, 15 aggravated vehicle taking with no deaths. In Cowley the figures are: 1,739 thefts from; 1,637 thefts of; and ten aggravated taking. These figures give some extent of the scale of the problem but more context is needed.

The total of notifiable crimes recorded in the Thames Valley Police area for the same ten months was 167,875 so the combined total of thefts from, thefts of and aggravated taking (56,676) constitutes 33.76% of recorded crime¹². For the Oxford area car crime (6,729) constitutes 31.39% and for Cowley 3,386 car crimes represent 31.11%. The way these are made up is interesting. For 1992 in England and Wales the police recorded 1,546,841 thefts from or of cars with theft from cars (961,340) nearly double that for thefts of cars (585,501) (TVP, 1994).

The Cowley area is remarkable in that thefts of nearly outweigh thefts from, whereas in the Oxford area the pattern is much closer to the national one with 2,072 thefts from and 1,266 thefts of. Again in Cowley 'Other criminal damage' is the largest category of offence (2,403) with theft from (1,739) second and theft of (1,637) third with burglary in a dwelling fourth (1,175) and theft of a pedal cycle (1,031) fifth whereas for the whole of Thames Valley the rank order is theft from (36,925); other criminal damage (24,401); theft of (19,612); other theft

12. The clear up rate force wide was during the same period was 9.26% for thefts from and 15.49% for thefts of cars. In Cowley the figures were 5.86% and 23.34% respectively.

(18,183) and fifth burglary in a dwelling (17,895). Within Cowley nearly one sixth of thefts of vehicles (559) were from the beat area known as Headington BC30 whereas the figures for all four beats covering Blackbird Leys the figure was 283 (TVP 1994). A disproportionate number of car thefts is consistent with joyriding but also professional theft or insurance frauds.

So Cowley can be seen to be different to the surrounding area and the national pattern. It has more thefts of cars but also more thefts of pedal cycles. The relationship between car theft and cycle theft has yet to be made but anecdotally evidence Dutch experience is that a high cycle theft rate is correlated with a low car theft. This may suggest a higher proportion of thefts for short-term use by Dutch thieves - and therefore a bike will do. It is more likely that bikes are stolen in the UK for profit not for 'joycycling' or getting home. What is clear is that Cowley has a bike theft problem. The comparisons with cycle theft are not entirely whimsical. Cycles are a form of transport and public transport is seen as a potential preventer of car crime where the motive is getting home. The Guardian (14 September 1994) reported that according to the 1991 Census nationwide the most common way to travel to work was by car. This shows 67% of men use cars to travel to work. Cambridge (24%) and Oxford (19%) were picked out for their high use of bicycles for travel to work.

Nationally 78% of those found guilty of or cautioned for taking without consent and 60% of those who stole cars were aged 10-20 (Home Office, 1994b). In the Thames Valley Police area for the period January 1993 to the end of September 1993 the age of the principal offender of all notifiable offences cleared up was under 21 for 1,962 offences of theft from a vehicle and 1,976 for thefts of a motor vehicle. This represents 57.37% and 65.04% respectively. One under 10 is recorded as being responsible for a theft of a motor vehicle. The peak age for thefts of was 17 and 20 for thefts from. The peak for bicycle thefts was also 17. Shoplifting, however, at 4,422 offences was most popular amongst this age group. Both thefts of and from drop off with age though one over 70 year old was recorded for each offence. Specifically in the Cowley section for this period 13 was the youngest and the under 21s formed 59.77% of thefts from vehicles but 86.61% of thefts of vehicles. (TVP 1994)

The Second Islington Crime Survey (Crawford *et al*, 1989) asked respondents about: car ownership; stops by the police in their car; the priority that should be given by the police to theft of motor cars; experience as a witness of car crime; experience as a victim of car crime; the sentencing of reckless drivers and knowledge of car crime. Considering the extent of these questions and the interest in car crime the coverage in the final report is disappointing. In summary 49% of men but only 30% of women owned a motor vehicle. 16% reported being in a car stopped by police. The reasons given by the police were: Speeding 19%, Other Behaviour 23%, Vehicle Defect 18% and Routine Check 11%. 54% of women and 52% of men favoured custodial sentences for 'Reckless Driving Causing Accident in Which someone is Badly Hurt', 19% favoured a sentence less than one year, 24% a sentence of 1-5 years, 10% over 5 years and 11% suspended/probation. Of those not favouring imprisonment 24% favoured compensation to the victim and 6% a fine. The retributive note is seen to "reflect their feelings of vulnerability when faced with the prospect of a drunken driver in 'control' of a solid steel killing machine."

(1989:142)

'Public Assessment of Order of Policing Priorities' placed Sexual Assaults on Women first and Drunken Driving 6th and Theft of Motor Vehicles 15th. Few households (5.3%) had suffered vandalism and only in 9% of these cases was it to the family car. Nearly a fifth of respondents (18%) knew someone who had 'Caused an Accident by Reckless Driving and 19% admitted to driving over the limit themselves. Only 36% of car break-ins were reported to police 38% thinking it 'pointless'.

On a smaller scale than the Islington Crime survey but directed specifically at car crime May and Hobbs (1992) interviewed 18 victims of car theft. They concentrated on victim satisfaction with police response but they still felt able to say that victim attitudes to offenders was moderate and supportive of motor projects. As there was no real expectation that police could do much, and victims only reported for insurance purposes, they were quite satisfied with police performance. Cars were most often stolen from pay and display car parks. None of the victims had car alarms which they conclude might prevent opportunistic theft but not vandalism and displacement. First reactions to the theft were confusion or shock. May and Hobbs say responses were gender-based but the examples given do not appear to reflect this. One woman is said to have been completely shattered whereas her husband just wondered how they were going to get the shopping home. But another woman said "To me it's a fairly harmless thing to do - I mean it doesn't emotionally upset me to have my car stolen."

Since Hobbs and May's work, the reporting of joyriding and the likening of car criminals to hyenas in advertising in Car Crime Prevention Year 1992 may have altered perceptions of the offence and of its gravity. Impact may differ between men and women but also between those for whom a car is solely a practical necessity and those for whom it forms part of their identity. As the argument of this study is for similarities between joyriders and all motorists, the greatest victim impact may be on those most similar to joyriders. Just as joyriding is more than stealing a car so for some victims it will represent more than just the loss of a car. To discover both the incidence and impact of car crime victimisation would require not only victim surveys but in depth interviewing on both the practical and symbolic significance of the car for the victim. Observations from fieldwork suggests that 'reformed' joyriders are keen on keeping their cars secure, relying on their own DIY solutions rather than commercial products.

sentencing of joyriders

When Gibbens (1958) studied car theft amongst Borstal Boys in 1953 and 1955 (nearly 20% had taken cars) he noted that sentences for 'taking and driving away a vehicle' varied considerably between courts, ranging from a conditional discharge in one court to six months' imprisonment at another. In 1992, 33% of all recorded offenders were cautioned for theft of a vehicle and 34% for taking without consent (Home Office, 1994b). The younger the offender the more likely a caution; 78% of car thieves aged 10-16 and 63% of those who took without consent received cautions. Of those coming before the courts 33% of all juvenile car thieves and

32% of those taking without consent were discharged, about half received a community sentence. Immediate custody in a Young Offender Institution was the fate of 8% and 7% of car thieves and 'twocers'. Nationally, in 1992 juveniles sentenced under the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act numbered 411, of whom 97 were sent to a Young Offenders Institute.

Oxfordshire Probation Service prepared a total of 1164 Pre Sentence Reports to the Courts for the twelve months October 1992 to September 1993 only 73 were for TWOC, Being Carried or the Aggravated versions of these (Proctor and Townsend, 1994).¹³ The most common proposal was Community Service with nearly the same number suggesting either a straight probation order or a probation order with a condition to attend the local motor project.

other means of tackling joyriding: Situational and Social

In this section a number of alternative or additional solutions to car crime both situational and social are examined. Situational measures are examined first. The section on social crime prevention is largely taken up with describing what motor projects are and how they work.

This is not the place to discuss the typologies of crime prevention measures (see Brantingham and Faust, 1976 and Clarke and Mayhew, 1980). Here situational is taken to mean crime prevention addressed to reducing criminal opportunities often by target-hardening, removal or disguise i.e. one that is not interested in the disposition of the criminal or only assumes the criminal's limited rationality. Social crime prevention on the other hand assumes that the disposition or at least the behaviour of the criminal can be changed so that previously recognised and ongoing opportunities for crime are ignored. Clearly there is some scope for overlap, where this occurs it will be discussed.

The Home Office has placed considerable emphasis on situational crime prevention for many crimes such as: Closed Circuit Television (CCTV); Neighbourhood Watch; cashless wage transactions; anti-climb paint etc. Increased peripheral security for cars makes no assumption about why cars are stolen merely that if they are made difficult enough to steal then they won't be. Situations can be altered in more sophisticated ways. For example, where research shows that car crime is predominantly due to temporary use of cars to get home after public transport closes down then the provision of public transport would be a situational crime prevention measure.

Situational solutions to car crime have, more typically, been to improve the security of cars through improved locks, alarms, immobilisers, CCTV in Car Parks and advertising campaigns (£7.5 Million in 1992 and 1993) to encourage motorists to lock their cars. The effectiveness of all these must be in doubt given the continued prevalence of car crime.¹⁴ When steering locks were made compulsory for all new cars from 1972 car theft went down for those

13. The numbers of those prepared on theft of vehicles is not known because the PROBIS information system used by the service only records the value of goods not type.

14. For those interested in these issues see: Southall and Ekblom (1986); Webb and Laycock (1992); Houghton (1992); Webb, Brown and Bennett (1992); Spencer (1992) and Tilley N (1993). The close grouping of the publication of these reports reflects the interest in the area during the period.

cars but increased for older vehicles suggesting that the opportunist thief may well be deterred but also be displaced to easier targets.

Each successive measure is seen to augment the other measures rather than replace it. Thus a well-protected car may boast steering lock, door deadlocks, a unique ignition key, a bolt-on steering wheel or handbrake device and wheel-clamp by way of locking mechanisms. In addition it may have an alarm sufficiently sophisticated to differentiate an attempt to steal the vehicle from movement caused by the wind or playful children. The newer alarm systems may have reduced the amount of noise pollution caused by alarms but they still rely on public reporting or official action. Electronic engine immobilisation can be seen as a form of locking and is now increasingly fitted to new cars as standard.

Some cars are now fitted with a 'Tracker' system. This system relies on a hidden transponder being activated once the car is reported stolen, it may then be tracked by the police who have signed up to the system. If deterrence does not work detection should ensue. This system may work best for cars at risk of professional theft rather than the more transitory joyriding where the car might be stolen and wrecked before its disappearance is noted. The expense of the system ensures that only the most expensive cars are likely to be covered. A low-tech version of this is the Vehicle Watch scheme whereby a sticker in the car (made difficult to remove) denotes that the owner has agreed to be stopped by the police if seen driving the car between a commonly agreed time - such as between midnight and six in the morning. The sticker should then deter the opportunist thief through fear of increased risk of being stopped. Different forces have differing systems and some have suggested an age-related sticker whereby owners obviously over thirty can signal agreement to their vehicle being stopped if driven by anyone under twenty five (say) working on the principle that joyriders and car thieves are young. The same logic would allow women car owners to protect their vehicles by inviting the police to stop their vehicle if driven by a man. This appears not to have been suggested yet.

Just as the perimeter security of vehicles can be increased so can the places from which cars are often stolen. CCTV surveillance of whole Town Centres and individual shops, banks and building societies has proved popular (Honest and Charman, 1992) despite civil liberties concerns (Liberty, 1989). The fast growth of such systems has led to suggestions that proper planning and evaluation have not been carried out (Groombridge and Murji, 1994). CCTV appears to offer a common-sense solution to opportunist crime yet, Tilley (1993) identifies nine possible mechanisms (some contradictory) for CCTV to work in Car Parks. Where the mechanism is in tune with the prevailing context Tilley's evaluation is that CCTV can work but that the effect wanes with time. CCTV cameras more generally, roadside speed cameras and police helicopter and squad car cameras have all been able to capture evidence of car theft and subsequent bad driving which then becomes TV entertainment mirroring the way that motorsport accidents have, with TV shows and videos dedicated to them.¹⁵

Where situational crime prevention only knows there are potential offenders who may

15. See, for instance, BBC1's *Crime Beat* 5 June 1997.

offend if something is not placed in their way; social crime prevention assumes that all sorts of characteristics of the offender are important and the offence less so. They may not always have a clear idea what to do with offenders but they are clear that the way forward is to deal with offenders and their offending behaviour. Motor projects are a good example of social crime prevention. Another potential solution is in the provision of driving lessons and car education for pre-legal driving age children. This may be held in conjunction with a motor project but one solution has been provided by a driving school through the education system. The scheme is called Ignition and combines elements of both situational and social crime prevention.

motor projects

The 1970 report of the Advisory Council on the Penal System recommended the establishment of motor projects. The longest established is Ilderton which has been running for twenty years. The National Association of Motor Projects (NAMP) has about one hundred and twenty projects in membership. It was formed in 1986 to promote educational and vocational training of young people under 25 who are at risk of offending and the rehabilitation of those convicted, with a view to reducing the risk of re-offending. How each of the individual motor projects in membership does this is a matter for the project. There are car crime education groups or specifically car crime orientated offending behaviour groups in HMYOI Glen Parva and Castlington. There is a banger racing project within the walls of HMYOI Feltham.

Clark (1993), Development Officer for NAMP, defines motor projects as follows:

A motor project is any initiative which, in some way, involves young people with motor vehicles. Such involvement may be in the form of vehicle maintenance, road safety, teaching driving skills, vehicle preparation, go-karting, off-road motor cycling or banger racing.

It is almost inevitable that the majority of young people, and particularly young men, will be interested in motor vehicles. The motor vehicle, and in particular the car, plays a very important part in the lives of all of us. Cars are advertised as glamorous, exciting vehicles owned by successful and wealthy people. Motor racing is a prestige sport attracting huge sponsorship and a very high profile coverage in the media. The sheer volume of cars now on the road keeps us constantly aware of the major role they play in our lives. Young people are very susceptible to outside influences. It is not surprising therefore that many see being a success in terms of owning or driving fast cars.

Unfortunately there is a substantial minority of young people who know that they will never be able to afford the cars that they see advertised on TV and the hoardings. That fact does not stop them yearning for the excitement that such cars appear to offer. When other influences are also present the temptation to steal a car may become too much. Once the initial step has been taken, subsequent thefts become easier and easier, and the 'offending cycle' becomes more and more difficult to break. Motor projects can break this cycle by involving young offenders in worthwhile activities, teaching new skills, requiring them to address their offending and take responsibility for their actions. Projects also give them the opportunity to participate in activities which involve the excitement of controlled risk taking and competition. This opportunity has to be earned, however.

If young people at risk of becoming offenders can be involved similarly, the indicators are that they can be diverted from offending.

Clearly this definition allows for major differences in the solutions each project employs depending on how the problem is viewed locally and, crucially, by the availability of resources and the constraints attached to the funding. Local Authority Youth Service provision or Home Office Safer Cities funding might allow for more preventative or diversionary work. Funding associated with the Probation Service will require work with older and convicted offenders.

A popular conception of the motor project is that of the 'banger project': an Intermediate Treatment project where a 'charismatic mechanic' held sway - a place where 'boys will be boys' both workers and volunteers. Such projects may still exist and many of those involved in all projects will admit an ongoing passion for cars. However, many projects are now addressing the wider social issues and the very real need to satisfy funders and the courts that motor projects work.

Research into joyriding and car crime (discussed in Chapter 2 and 3) emphasize that the initial reason for car theft is excitement and peer pressure - Light *et al* (1993) and Webb & Laycock (1992). However, different conclusions can be drawn from this. One school of thought holds that, because car theft is so exciting, only something equally exciting (banger racing and karting etc) can grab the interest of the (mostly) young men who do it. Opposed to this is the argument that nothing (not even sex or drugs) can match the excitement of car theft. This second school also points out the experience of Belfast where the prospect of 'knee-capping' by the paramilitaries or shooting by the security forces at road blocks fails to deter joyriding. The ongoing re-evaluation of the 'nothing works' argument of the 70s does suggest that some things do work. If motor projects are to work they will need to be clear where their intervention is best made and to monitor and evaluate accordingly. This has, until now, been a weakness of such projects. Those who work with them 'know' they work - it is self-evident. They are clearly cheaper than prison but it is still unclear whether the guiding principle of motor projects - actual or potential car thieves working with cars - is proven. All of these issues are taken up in Chapter 6.

To illustrate what motor projects do the history and main programmes of the TRAX Motor Project in Oxford are described below with occasional comparative or additional information about the Ilderton Motor Project. The description is intended only as a guide, further description and analysis is to be found in Chapter 2, where the literature is discussed and Chapter 6 on the Findings. The spectacular events recorded by the media on the Blackbird Leys Estate drew attention to the problem of car crime in Oxford but the history of TRAX (as it is usually known) goes back beyond this.¹⁶ The impulse behind TRAX came from the Probation Service responding to conversations between Chief Superintendent David Lindley and Assistant Chief Probation Officer Tim Powell about the escalating car crime problem in Oxford. Patsy Townsend, a main grade probation officer, joined the probation services Community Resource Development Team in July 1991 and, after visiting Ilderton Motor Project, Walsall Motor Project and the DRIVE Project in Telford, recommended a Motor Project for Oxford. Events on the 'Leys' provided the stimulus for action on her proposals. TRAX was launched on 31 July 1992.

16. It is not an acronym.

At the time of the fieldwork (September 1993 - June 1994) ten respondents answered a number of questions (Groombridge, 1994). Their ages ranged from 14 to 27 so fall within the sample described by Light *et al* (1993). The mean age was 17.8. Four were at school, two unemployed, one in training and only one in work with one refusing to answer.

The Car Crime Group at TRAX was funded by the Home Office Probation Service Division under its Supervision Grant Scheme from Social Services, Education Department, local business and fund-raising. It had a modern workshop in the Isis Business Centre on an industrial estate in the shadow of Rover's Cowley works and less than a mile from the Blackbird Leys Estate. It now has more central premises and, following changes in Home Office policy, is no longer funded by central Government.

TRAX run separate preventative programmes for under and over seventeens, separate Car Crime Groups for adults and youths sentenced by the courts and the DIAL programme (Driving Instruction And Law) for probation clients who could benefit from driving instruction and sessions for local schools. The normal timetable is set out in table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 TRAX Motor Project Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Afternoon	Workshop School Session	Workshop Under 17 Team	Workshop School Session	Workshop Over 17 Team	Workshop Under 17 Team
Evening 5-10 pm	Workshop Over 17 Team Car Crime Programme Opportunities		Workshop Car Crime Programme	Car Crime Programme Group work	

Weekends might involve racing/practising for the under and over 17s, collectively known as the TRAX Teams. In their first year of operation they won the National Association of Motor Projects Banger Racing Championships.

The TRAX Teams might be seen as forming the central focus of the project for a number of reasons. First, they do the racing, which attracts the greatest public interest and often misunderstanding. Second, the team members are likely to be with the project for longer - some have now been with the project from its earliest days.

The Car Crime Programme works with known convicted offenders sentenced by the Courts. Programmes last eight weeks and are run for both those over age 17, sentenced by the adult courts, and under 17s, sentenced by the Youth Court. In the first year of operation, to September 1993, they ran five car crime programmes.

The DIAL programme involves a six week course which looks at issues around driving and the law, such as drinking and driving or the correct documentation. Learning methods include group discussions, quizzes and videos. It involves no driving but encouragement is given

towards taking the test. A local driving instructor is involved who also offers discounted lessons. By June 1994 four courses had been run but TRAX were disappointed with the numbers attending. One reason may be that TRAX premises were then difficult to get to without a car. Schools have also made use of TRAX facilities and expertise. From the opening of TRAX to June 1993 a group of boys and girls from Banbury Tutorial Unit visited weekly and worked on building Minis for racing. In September 1993 they started work with Cowley St James Special Unit but it ended shortly after when the funding from the feeder schools was not forthcoming. There are plans to contribute to 'Education Plus'¹⁷ at the nearby Peers School. Peers School is not only near to TRAX but to Blackbird Leys. The school had an INSET day after the 'riots' on the Leys so the school was closed. It was decided not to discuss joyriding or the 'riot' with pupils. The police had wanted to come and "talk to the boys" about car crime. The headmaster refused but did let them visit more often (twelve times in all) to discuss the wider issues with smaller mixed tutor groups. Apparently at schools where the police did address boys en masse they were given a 'hard time' (Interview with Bernard Clark, Head of Peers School 4 March 1994).

Whilst TRAX team sessions start in the evening it is not uncommon to find some of the team there, already working on cars. Working on cars can mean stripping out a newly arrived vehicle of all dangerous or superfluous material; stripping down an engine, brakes, transmission or steering; painting cars in the TRAX colours of black with the team name and sometimes a drivers name. There may be cathartic bashing away at a reluctant panel or painstaking work on a fiddly part. Both may attract a more or less helpful audience. Sometimes others may be called over to help or to learn. Intricate feats of welding as well as 'sparktacular' displays of cutting may attract an audience. Whilst each car belongs to a team and the proposed driver is pencilled in there is always time to look at or learn from what mates, or particularly staff, can demonstrate. Depending on the numbers of members and the closeness to a race will determine the balance between starting and finishing activities.

The workshop has the 'feel' of a garage but the cleanliness of a Kwik Fit Exhaust centre rather than a 'dodgy' grease merchant where the only 'clean' thing is the naked woman on the tyre calendar. Unipart, a TRAX sponsor, produce such a calendar but the Probation Service's Equal Opportunities policy means it may not be displayed. There is no music. The impression of arriving at a tyre or exhaust centre is heightened by the location on an industrial estate; there are no 'bangers' in sight only the smart cars of local businesses. The disadvantage of the site is that the cars have to be stored nearly a mile away in a Rover compound.

By comparison the Ilderton Motor Project in South London is cramped up in the middle of a roundabout under a railway arch. Cars and parts are piled up everywhere - convenient but limiting. It looks 'dodgy', the music is loud but again there are no calendars and much the same activities going on. The description Broad (1982:66) gives of Ilderton could be true today down to the visit by an ITV film crew (See Chapter 6 for fieldnote descriptions). At both there are staff and members but also a group who are difficult to place easily in either category immediately.

17. After hours additional non-compulsory non-National Curriculum education.

On an under 17s evening at TRAX an over 17 may be helping out. On an over 17s evening an under 17 may turn up on some pretext. At both, friends of staff or members may turn up briefly often on 'car' business, again reinforcing the garage feel.

Typically at about 7 pm - earlier if bored or cold, later if everyone is busy or nobody wants the hassle of taking the order and sorting out the money - a chip break occurs. The break may vary in length and content but is the major opportunity for talking. However, as this is usually a group of young and older men it is frequently boisterous, most smoke and swear. 'Sex and drugs and rock and roll'¹⁸ are discussed but so are children's TV programmes, arcade or video games and local gossip. One evening they share with relish a story about a local solicitor known to speed in his car, there was the punning implication that he was partial to amphetamines. The relish may be related to what Sykes and Matza (1957) describe as the 'techniques of neutralisation' deployed by offenders, "it wasn't me", "I didn't harm anyone", or, in this instance, "everyone's at it". Sykes and Matza specifically mention that auto theft is passed off by offenders as 'borrowing'. Whether representing 'techniques of neutralisation' or male banter it coincides with the observations of Vass (1984 & 1990) on Community Service and would not surprise those who work with young men. Buckley and Williams (1991) particularly note the difficulties of working with 'Rambo'.

After the break they go back to working on the cars until about 10 pm. In addition to the 'chat' at the chip break occasional chats and male banter puncture the application to task. Poor working practices are more likely to be pointed out than sexist or homophobic language. Working side by side means that conversations about difficult questions need not take place face to face. However, it is not unusual in the course of the evening for someone to seek out a member of staff to have a talk about a particular problem, whether legal or social.

Both the TRAX and Ilderton Motor Projects are involved in Banger Racing and therefore are in an atypical minority of motor projects (Martin and Webster 1994). Most motor projects would race in meetings specifically organised for them but both TRAX and Ilderton also race against private teams on equal terms and also at public meetings in special races. The descriptions set out below are intended to indicate not only what happens at a race meeting but also introduce further aspects of car culture.

Wimbledon Stadium - Sunday

A large crowd gathers more than two hours before the first race. The pits are part of the car park - the cars attract the attentions of the crowd who move freely around the pits. The crowd constitutes predominately white men from their teens to middle age. Some are accompanied by girlfriends or young families. There are to be nine races. Three sets of races for each category: Bangers; Hot Rods and Lightning Rods. Bangers are the cheapest form of the sport and Ilderton have three cars prepared to race against private teams. Many of the racers will have nothing more than survival or crashing others on their minds rather than winning. The chaos of the race makes

18. The lyric is Ian Dury's but for 'rock and roll' read rave, techno or jungle music.

it difficult to believe that one can plot and follow a strategy for winning.

The noise and the speed of the rods is exciting. The bangers come on third. These seem less exciting to this spectator but is probably terrifying to the participants as thirty bangers attempt to race around a four hundred metre track. The fifteen laps leave over half the cars damaged or stalled. These are cleared from the track and the drivers and mechanics have until the next race to get the cars back into working order. Few survive a full meeting.

As the dark of evening comes the pits seem like a cinematic version of hell. Sledge hammers are wielded, some have welding equipment or cutters that send showers of sparks. Some cars catch fire and despite a 5 mph speed limit in the pits cars are driven at speed around the pits through which the crowds continue to mill. The crashed cars attract as much attention from the spectators as the glossy paint jobs of the rods. Advice is sometimes proffered and assistance given.

Arena Essex

This meeting is to form part of the normal Easter Monday programme of banger and stock car racing. There are to be three special races in which youths can race. Two form part of the pre-race warm ups the survivors go forward to a final in the body of the meeting. The programme explains what Motor Projects are but mentions joyriding only indirectly. The racers get their names in the programme, so are pleased. TRAX, Ilderton and the Bradford Motor Education Project (BMEP) are to race and have brought a number of mums and sisters to watch - though no dads. A BBC camera crew interviews all the motor project leaders and some of the drivers and mechanics for a programme called First Sight. They film the work on the cars and attach a camera to a car to record the racing in progress.

The races are only for IMP, BMEP and TRAX plus two individuals so don't have the look of the adult races at Wimbledon nor of the adult races in the main programme. The stadium is much more open so the noise is less; the adrenal thrill less. The crowd is mostly young men, young couples and families; again very few black people.

As motor projects are often intended as 'alternatives' to custody their presumed lack of punitiveness is often held against them. Put simply the allegation is that they are 'treats for naughty boys'. This position is explored below in respect of an allegation against TRAX in the magazine *Carweek*.

This scheme seems little short of lunacy to me. What must youngsters who obey the law think, some of whom would love to go on a high performance driving course but haven't got the money?"

"Oh yeah, that's really cool. If they nick a car now the police won't catch up with them.

These quotes, respectively from Sir Teddy Taylor MP and member of the public, are taken from an article in *Carweek* (26 January 1994). The article was headlined "JOYRIDERS PUT ON THE

RIGHT TRACK BY F1 ACE WATSON” and sub-headed “Fury as we reveal how young offenders are being taught to race for free at Silverstone’s driving school.” The quotes and the general tone of the article all draw on the workhouse principles of ‘less eligibility’ inscribed in the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834.

The article quotes both Myles Daly, the TRAX Project Leader, and Committee member Chief Inspector Clarke respectively putting the other side of the case, “The kids only get into trouble because they are bored. We try to give them a new purpose in life.” and, “Each joyrider has the potential to steal 200 cars a year. If we can stop one, then we’ve saved a lot of money for everyone. A place on TRAX is a lot cheaper than keeping someone in prison.” The claims made in the article, however, are almost entirely false, particularly the main claim that “As part of the TRAX course convicted joyriders are allowed to drive Peugeot 309s around Silverstone”. By way of comparison, or to incite envy, they helpfully inform readers that a full days’ advanced saloon driving course costs £200. The truth is more prosaic; no convicted joyriders are allowed to drive as part of the TRAX programme for offenders but voluntary members may race bangers. John Watson has been supportive of TRAX but no TRAX members have been given the use of his Peugeot 309s. *Carweek* eventually apologised and published a correction.

Ignition

Ignition is a modular education course for use by teachers with 15-17 year olds. It is provided by the British School of Motoring (BSM) and sponsored by Vauxhall Motors to meet Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum’s requirements for Road Safety Education and cross-curricular themes such as Citizenship. It involves students working through workbooks, discussing written and video material (including one on ‘Car Adverts’), off-road driving tuition and on-road risk perception training using simulators (BSM, 1994). Whilst mostly aimed at Road Safety it is explicitly intended to reduce car crime - and Middlesborough Police were said to credit it with reducing car crime 30% in the area of a school that introduced, though ‘offenders’ are barred from taking part (The Guardian 15 November 1994).

Drama

There are other ways of addressing car crime socially; for instance, both Theatre Adad and GW Theatre tour plays on joyriding to schools. Theatre Adad have been funded to tour schools in Safer Cities areas and worked with the Ilderton Motor Project in the development of their drama. GW Theatre work extensively with schools in Manchester in cooperation with the probation service. These address the issue of car crime by recognising the attractions of joyriding but dramatising them to gain audience interest for attention to the ‘message’. Where these succeed dramatically and in tackling offending behaviour it seems likely that didacticism is to be avoided. A composite description of one such scheme is set out below. Both the content of the drama and the responses of the children can be seen as evidence of a common car culture.

Whilst the drama is scripted, the setting and audience differ for each performance.

Further differences arise and multiply as the unscripted forum and workshop portion of the session unfold. The differences of the children's responses keep the actors fresh.

The drama opens with the four cast members taking a wheel chair from the back of the stage and pushing it between them, from one to the other, and daring each other to take it with much mutual baiting with the epithet "chicken". One takes it and the others push him quickly towards the audience. They stop just short and he jumps out to declaim his joyriding creed in couplets such as "I'll run you over in my Vauxhall Nova".

Then unfolds the tale of Mickey ("I come from Newcastle me. Me friends call me Gazza.") and his cousin Bazza, from Manchester, their friend Cheryl ("she's tough") and Tina who Mickey fancies. They are about 14. It is the summer holidays. There is nothing to do.

Hanging around behind Tescos one evening, bored with racing shopping trolleys, a dramatic event transforms their evening and their lives. A BMW screams into the Car Park. Its two occupants leap out, leaving the doors open and some keys in. A police car is heard but it travels on. Silence returns to the Car Park and the car appears to be beckoning them. "It is handsome." "It is 'wicked'." Only Tina rejoins "It's stolen."

Cheryl gets in the driving seat after a moment of hesitation and taunts Mickey to get in. She moves to the passenger seat and he gets in. Bazza is pressed too and gets in. Tina does too but continues to express misgivings about being there and the speed they travel and Mickey's driving.

They get home late and Pauline, Mickey's mother and Bazza's aunt played by 'Tina', gives them an opportunity to explain what they have been up to. They lie to her and she knows it. They sleep badly and Mickey has a dream. He is beating Nigel Mansell and receiving the acclaim of the crowd.

The next day the boys go to the cinema (Mad Max!). They meet 'Dave', the driver of the stolen BMW played by Cheryl. After some teasing 'Dave' eventually offers to teach them all he knows about joyriding. Later that week he cannot come out with them but they feel that he has taught them well and they decide to go solo.

The car is stolen and the girls come along. The ride proves fatal. A child (Katy) crossing the road on a zebra crossing with her mother is killed. The mother's grief is witnessed and she (played by Cheryl) delivers a moving speech expressing her hatred of joyriding - the act and the expression. The speech is drawn from the real-life lament of the mother of a child victim.

In the closing scene some months later Bazza is visiting his aunt and Mickey again. Mickey is in the wheel chair. This time it is not a metaphorical car but a real wheelchair. Clearly the crash has disabled him. Bazza is sad and addressing the audience he asks "Have you ever wished you could go back in time and change just one thing?"

The actors then use a warm up/ice-breaking exercise to get the children involved. 'Simon

says' is common. Seeing the actors and teachers acting 'stupid' helps the children get in a creative mood.

One actor then invites the children to remember what Bazza had said. They eventually come up with his desire to go back in time to change one thing. They are then invited to think what Bazza could have done differently. They are reminded it is only a play and therefore anything can be changed. They call out various suggestions.

The actors reprise the moment when the BMW arrives and the kids get in. The children are asked how they felt Bazza felt at the moment before he got in the car. "Confused", "worried", "scared" come the answers. But he gets in. Why? "He wanted to be cool." "He didn't want to be called 'chicken'." A girl at John Burns School says "peer pressure". A check with the cast later reveals this is the first time so knowing an answer is given but the look that passed between the child and teacher suggested to the cast that some prior work on joyriding might have primed the child.

What would the children do? Again various suggestions are made from getting in to walking away. A volunteer is sought to stand in Bazza to try out the ideas. Another child might play Auntie Pauline or an adult who might be told. One innovative suggestion was to let down the tyres of the cars though it was also thought that this might lead the child to be hit by mates and possibly still prosecuted by the police. Both girls and boys come forward; not always to play same sex roles.

The children then split down into groups with an actor each. Sometimes the teachers move with the groups but this seems not to inhibit the children who are invited to think about cars and driving. They are also shown pictures of crashed cars that have been stolen. They are asked to think how fast they thought the cars were going when they crashed. The cars have usually crashed at a low speed but always the children estimate very high speeds.

They are then invited to make up a jingle, rap, poem or slogan aimed at discouraging joyriding. A rap is popular. The girls usually sing and provide the words whereas the boys prefer to keep in the background providing the 'beat box' effect for the backing track. Early suggestions usually mirror or even reproduce current road safety slogans such as "Kill your speed not a child" or "Don't drink and drive" but as the actors suggest possible lines or ideas the children start to develop their own work. At neither performance did a child mention the Car Crime Prevention Year hyena adverts. An example is:

Stop that you fool you're not very cool...
this is the end of our rap
joyriding is a death trap.

And picturing a hospital scene we find "...the joyrider was broken hearted, wished that he had never started."

Finally the company invite the children to think about the one and a half hours they have worked together and to possibly work with their teachers on the issues and perhaps presenting their more polished work to assembly. The company have received letters and examples of work from schools. These are examined below.

On Friday 21 May 1993 I revisited John Burns School to meet the two classes of 10 -11 years and their teachers. The children were asked a number of questions and teachers joined in to stimulate discussion, or restrain it at times. The children clearly remembered the performance and its message; one boy reciting the whole plot.

With forty children shouting out it wasn't always easy to gain individual impressions but it did give a good picture of some of the group dynamics. Under cover of the general hubbub some boys took the opportunity to shout out 'naughty' or 'silly' answers and throughout about half a dozen boys were the most vocal. A number of girls did make individual contributions but they needed some coaxing.

The central issue of peer pressure was identified as one of the play's messages. This chimed in with the work of the Parachute Company's puppet drama on bullying which they had also seen. This explained why one of the children had used the expression "peer pressure" during the forum. As they were reminded of how the actors had called each other "chicken" nods of assent from the children suggested a practical knowledge of how peer pressure worked.

Many of the boys and some of the girls had clear ideas about the sorts of cars they wanted and why. All said they expected to become drivers and even though they knew many adults who drove badly they would drive well. Asked to describe what good driving was one girl ventured "slow" but was immediately shouted down. Four boys thought they might drive "a little badly" Examples they and the class gave of "driving a little badly" were: red light jumping; cutting up; speeding and seat belt offences. Many felt that the legal driving age limit should be lower. The lowest 'sensible' answer was "when you an reach the pedals". Some claimed to have driven cars but none to be joyriders therefore their parents or relatives must have connived at it.

On joyriding specifically the kids seemed clear that it was bad but many felt that nothing could be done about it as "money", being "hooked" or the attractions of the "adrenalin rush" could not easily be overcome. Few thought the play itself would work. It was entertaining and the workshops enjoyed. Indeed they wanted it to be longer and possibly to do a play about joyriding themselves. Only severe sentences or some traumatic incident in the course of joyriding were thought likely to be effective.

The view of teachers was gained informally during the various visits and from letters to the company. Teachers wrote from: St Anselm's; Allfarthing (2); The Wandle and Southmead. There were also letters from teachers in schools in Lewisham. All mention the quality of the performance, the enjoyment and the thought provoked in the children.

For example: “It helped the children understand a very difficult topic, which they otherwise might have tackled in a rather flippant way.” and “They certainly won’t forget the message that was put across so well.” Commenting on the difficulty of the audience and the power of the drama one teacher said: “Our children are not an easy audience and quickly “see through” things. They were totally involved and some were near to tears at times!”

Similar comments were made by teachers at the time of the performance and on the evaluation visit about the children’s enjoyment of the drama, attention to its message and the creative and thought provoking work flowing from it.

Whatever the effectiveness of the play in crime prevention terms it clearly inspired creative work. A tour of the school revealed that the next two classes, that had not done - but merely witnessed - the workshops, had incorporated some poems on joyriding into a transport project. An analysis of the work of children sent to the company is set out below. All quotes use original spelling and punctuation.

Fifty eight letters of appreciation to Theatre Adad have been examined. They are mostly in the nature of a thank you for a good performance. A number do refer directly to the content of the play and workshop like ‘Duncan’ from Allfarthing School who is worth quoting at length: If you crash, not only are you, likely to hurt yourself. You are likely, to hurt and kill others. This will effect the families involved, the community and yourself if you kill somebody. Because the thought will stay with you for the rest of your life. If you steal a car, then the owner will be affected, because the car will probably be wrecked. If you get injured you will take up beds in hospital for no reason. You would also affect the police, fire and ambulance services, because they will need to give assistance.

If your friends wanted to joyride and you didn’t want to, your friends would probably pressure you to get in the car and if you don’t you might be called a chicken. You might get in the car, to look big in front of your friends and if they don’t they would be left out. If you were joyriding on the motorway and you broke down, then you might cause blockages.

This example shows a strong sense of the various consequences that can flow from joyriding for the young person, the victim and the wider community.

‘Tessa’, from Allfarthing, says, “I enjoyed the play as it proved to us joyriding is dangerous. I hope seeing this and acting out ourselves joyriding will stop.” There are many letters like Tessa’s and Duncan’s they tend to show the clear influence of the play and, possibly, of teachers promptings. Some of the letters are decorated.

Greater creativity can be seen in the raps and poems though these too are marked by the promptings of the play and class homogeneity. Thirty six additional letters of poems and raps have been examined. As five of the poems were repeated by several from a class a total of only nineteen poems were examined.

A pair of poems contrasted the view of the joyrider with that of the family; whether of the victim or offender is not made clear.

I never thought this would happen to me.
But it did it ruined my family.
All our lives have gone to pieces.
And the pain never ceases.
Now I am at the end of my sad tale.
I tell you now joyriding will always fail.

We broke into a car
It was fine so far.
We had had a drink.
But we didn't think.
100 mph down the motorway.
I was thinking yeah hea hea!
Breaks were squealing, wheels going wild
We hit the lamppost as well as a child.

conclusion

This chapter has briefly reviewed the concept of car culture, the history of joyriding, its legal position, possible definitions of joyriding, the current reality of joyriding and how the criminal justice system sentences joyriders. Finally, other means of tackling joyriding whether situational or social are introduced, particularly Motor Projects. All of these issues will be returned to in later chapters, particularly the overwhelming maleness of both the 'problem' and the 'solutions'. In the following chapter the literature that accepts a more narrow criminal justice/common-sense definition of joyriding is reviewed as is that on motor projects and on masculinities. In Chapter 3 the deficiencies of this narrow approach are more clearly set out.